

Message Text

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71

ACTION NEA-10

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----- 026329

R 081100Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0500

INFO COMIDEASTFOR

CINCPACFLT

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0511

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OCLR, QA, US

SUBJ: VISIT TO QATAR OF COMIDEASTFOR AND USS SEMMES

1. SUMMARY: COMIDEASTFOR/SEMMES VISIT TO QATAR WAS UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS. VISIT WARMLY RECEIVED BY QATARI HOSTS, WHO MOST IMPRESSED BY EXEMPLARY CONDUCT AND SPLENDID APPEARANCE OF OFFICERS, CREW AND SHIP ITSELF. RE SUBSTANCE, THERE MAY BE POSSIBILITY OF COOPERATION IN TRAINING AND EXERCISES BETWEEN COMIDEASTFOR SHIPS AND QATARI SEA ARM. END SUMMARY.

2. COMIDEASTFOR REAR ADMIRAL THOMAS J. BIGLEY, EMBARKED ON DDG 18 USS SEMMES UNDER COMMAND OF COMMANDER FREDERICK M. WILLIAMSON, VISITED QATAR MAY 4-6. THIS WAS FIRST US NAVAL SHIP VISIT SINCE OCT 1973 ARAB-ISRAEL WAR. OUR REQUEST FOR VISIT DURING CY75 WAS DECLINED BY GOQ IN REACTION TO ALLEGED US THREATS TO INVADE OIL PRODUCING GULF STATES.

3. GOQ HOST FOR VISIT WAS BRIGADIER MOHAMMED AL ATTIAH, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF QATAR ARMED FORCES. (COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, CONFIDENTIAL

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SHAYKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL THANI, AMIR'S OLDEST SON, WAS IN

COUNTRY BUT HAD JUST RETURNED FROM EUROPE WHERE HE HAD UNDERGONE MEDICAL TREATMENT AND WAS APPARENTLY INDISPOSED.) ATTIYAH RECEIVED AND RETURNED CALLS BY ADMIRAL BIGLEY AND COMMANDER WILLIAMSON, WHO WERE ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR. ATTIYAH ALSO HOSTED TRADITIONAL QATARI LUNCH (LAMB GRAB) IN HONOR OF COMIDEASTFOR AND SEMMES OFFICERS. CALL ALSO MADE ON FOREIGN MINISTER SHAYKH SUHAYM BIN HAMAD AL THANI.

4. ACTIVITIES INCLUDED LUNCH AND RECEPTION ABOARD THE SEMMES FOR SENIOR QATARI ARMED FORCES OFFICERS AND CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, AND LARGE GARDEN RECEPTION AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE ATTENDED BY SOME 350 GOQ OFFICIALS, LOCAL BUSINESSMEN, DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY. SEMMES CREW TOOK ON QATARIS IN BASKETBALL (WE WON) AND SOCCER, WHICH MATCH LOST WHEN QATARIS FIELDER NATIONAL TEAM WHICH HAD JUST PLACED THIRD IN GULF GAMES REGIONAL SOCCER TOURNAMENT. AN ESTIMATED 250 PERSONS TOURED SEMMES DURING PUBLIC VISITING HOURS, AND SOME 200 OF SHIP'S PERSONNEL TOURED LOCAL SIGHTS OF INTEREST, PARTICULARLY QATAR NATIONAL MUSEUM.

5. RE SUBSTANCE ON POLITICAL SIDE, WE ASKED GOQ FOREIGN MINISTER FOR HIS VIEWS ON US NAVAL PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN. SUHAYM TURNED QUESTION AROUND, ASKING WHETHER MIDEASTFOR DESIGNED AS "PROTECTIVE" ELEMENT IN AREA. ADMIRAL BIGLEY RESPONDED DESCRIBING MIDEASTFOR PURPOSE AS ONE OF PRESENCE AND GOODWILL. ON MILITARY SIDE, ATTIYAH EXPRESSED INTEREST IN POSSIBILITY OF JOINT EXERCISES BETWEEN SHIPS OF MIDEASTFOR AND QATARI SEA ARM, AS WELL AS IN OJT TRAINING FOR QATARI PERSONNEL ABOARD US SHIPS. (COMMENT: WE WILL FOLLOW UP ON THIS WITH ATTIYAH AND SHAYKH HAMAD.) THERE WAS ALSO DISCUSSION IN FAMILIAR TERMS OF GULF SECURITY AND PDRY.

6. COMMENT: COMIDEASTFOR AND SEMMES VISIT WAS UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS. EXEMPLARY CONDUCT OF OFFICERS AND CREW OF SEMMES AND IMPRESSIVE APPEARANCE OF SHIP CREATED GENUINELY WARM AND RECEPTIVE ATMOSPHERE AMONG QATARI HOSTS. WE HAVE RECEIVED MANY COMPLIMENTS ON VISIT AND EXPRESSIONS OF PLEASURE THAT US NAVAL VESSELS ONCE AGAIN VISITING DOHA. VISIT WAS A DEFINITE PLUS FOR US PRESENCE HERE AND HAS CONTRIBUTED POSITIVELY TO US-GOQ RELATIONS. OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO ADMIRAL BIGLEY, COMMANDER WILLIAMSON AND CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFICERS AND CREW OF SEMMES FOR THEIR EXCELLENT ASSISTANCE IN BRIGHTENING US IMAGE HERE.
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